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MONTHLY REVIEW

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VOL. 45
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WHAT IS THE MEANING OF IMPERIALISM?

Harry Magdoff

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE NAXALITE MOVEMENT

Tilak D. Gupta

ACCESS: IMPERIALIST EXPANSION IN THE POST COLD-WAR ERA

Daniel B. Schirmer

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CONTENTS | VOLUME 45 NUMBER 4 SEPTEMBER 1993

REVIEW OF THE MONTH: What is the Meaning of Imperialism?
by Harry Magdoff 1

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE NAXALITE MOVEMENT
by Tilak D. Gupta 8

ENGENDERING THE PHILIPPINE REVOLUTION: AN INTERVIEW WITH VICVIC by Delia D. Aguilar 25

ACCESS: POST COLD-WAR IMPERIALIST EXPANSION by Daniel B. Schirmer 38

TOWARD A CORD OF SOLIDARITY by Elizabeth C. Kim 52

CORRESPONDENCE
The Tempest and *Babouk* Shakespeare and the Colonial Subject
by Hal Jamison 58

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NOTES FROM THE EDITORS

Recently Louis Uchitelle, the top economic reporter for *The New York Times*, undertook a survey of mainstream thinking on the current economic situation in the United States. Here is the gist of what he found, as reported in a front-page story in the *Times* of July 17th:

"'There is much talk that this is a jobless recovery, but that is not the real story,' said Marvin Kosters, director of economic policy studies at the American Enterprise Institute in Washington, referring to the view that the economy can expand without adding many jobs. 'The real story is that the job growth in this recovery has turned out to be more or less commensurate with the job growth in previous recoveries, when you take into account that output has been less than in those previous recoveries.' Mr. Kosters' view was echoed across the political spectrum in more than two dozen interviews with economists, executives, government officials, labor, and small-business experts. It is a thesis shared by liberal economists like Robert M. Solow, a Nobel laureate at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; by business leaders like Jerry Jasinowski, president of the National Association of Manufacturers; and by Wall Street executives like John Lipsky, chief economist at Salomon Brothers. . . .The problem, in short, is weak demand, not a new world that has found a way to prosper without workers. . . .'We conclude that the main difference between the current situation and past situations is output,'

(Continued on inside back cover)

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WHAT IS THE MEANING OF IMPERIALISM?

SEP 2 1993

by HARRY MAGDOFF

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It is indeed strange to come across proposals to jettison the term imperialism when the classic features of imperialism are so central to current affairs. Certainly the end of the Cold War has not made that much difference. The invasion of Panama and the massive war against Iraq should be evidence enough that the nature of the beast has not changed. If anything, the collapse of the regimes in Eastern Europe has opened doors of opportunity for the advanced capitalist countries, and at the same time created space for competitive maneuvers among the major powers as to which of them gets to play the major role in one or another of the "newly opened territories." The steps taken to dominate the old and the new peripheries are, of course, not limited to direct military intervention: a variety of political, economic, and indirect military devices, depending on circumstances, are exploited. Moreover, the United States is not the only player. Other powers—France, Germany, Japan, and England—have in their own ways pursued the goal of controlling or influencing the affairs of former colonies and spheres of influence.

This is surely not news to the contributors to this symposium. And yet there is unhappiness with the concept of imperialism. A large measure of the unhappiness can be attributed to the use of a rigid definition of the term—one

This comment was invited by the editors of the *Radical History Review* for their symposium, "Imperialism: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis?" which appears in their Fall 1993 issue. The comments here are directed towards one theme raised in the symposium, as outlined in the quote on page 2 below.

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which squeezes the life out of history. This discontent and its cause has been common from the earliest days of the age of imperialism. And yet just when it appears to many scholars that imperialism has been superseded, history has a way of bringing the concept back to haunt us. I think that is already the case with the notion introduced at this roundtable to discard the term and substitute the word postimperialism. And why do some suggest that it should be discarded? Because,

> any concept of imperialism requires certain minimal characteristics such as rival empires seeking a large measure of monopoly—closed door—control of investment outlets, export markets, and low cost supplies of raw materials. Clearly the IMF, IBRD, GATT rules governing world trade prevent acquiring and/or consolidating of such monopolistic control. We are in the epoch of postimperialism.

Such a position might have seemed reasonable in, say, 1960, but only if one's vision was limited to the appearance of harmony among the advanced capitalist nations. For even then it would have been dangerous to overlook what was coming to a boil underneath the surface. While the expansion of capitalism has always presupposed, and indeed required, cooperation among its various national components—with respect to transportation facilities, weights and measures, monetary and credit arrangements, etc.—there has never been a time when these same national components ceased to struggle each for its own preferment and advantage. Centrifugal and centripetal forces have always existed at the very core of the capitalist process, with sometimes one and sometimes the other predominating. As a result, periods of peace and harmony have alternated with periods of discord and violence.

It would take us too far afield on this occasion to trace the differences in the nature of the centrifugal and centripetal forces in the era of imperialism and earlier capitalism. But it is important to recognize two major developments that underlie the changes in the period since the end of the Second

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World War which before long exposed notions about ultra-imperialism or postimperialism as illusions: 1. The rise and decline of the United States as the hegemonic power in the international capitalist world order; and 2. The change from the wave of vigorous growth during the early postwar decades to prolonged stagnation since the end of the 1960s. If ever there was an "epoch of postimperialism," as suggested in the above quote, it was a short-lived one, with enough potential contradictions to eventually produce its very opposite.

At its start, the early postwar world order seemed to have been created in an environment of sweet harmony. It was, however, an order that was by and large imposed by the United States. At that time, the United States had unquestionable primacy in arms, productive capacity, and finance sufficient to whip the rest of the capitalist world into shape and run it. In place of the earlier gold standard, the U.S. dollar was enshrined by the Bretton Woods Agreement as the leading international currency, underpinned by Washington's undertaking to redeem dollars held by central bankers for gold. Sitting in the driver's seat, the United States promoted, as had the British in their heyday, the ideology of the free market and free trade. International institutions were initiated and adapted to sustain a more or less unified imperialist network aimed at enlarging the scope of world trade, keeping reins on the former colonial world, and restraining by war or other means nations trying to break out of the network.

U.S. hegemony, however, like Britain's before it, lasted less than three decades. And, similar to Britain's experience, this period was characterized by a major and unusual economic boom. Further, the hegemony withered when the boom petered out. By the late 1960s, the economic strength of other advanced capitalist nations (notably Germany and Japan) was rapidly catching up with and able to challenge U.S. primacy in foreign trade and finance. Harmony among the leading nations was further disturbed because of the way the United States took advantage of the privileged position of the U.S.

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dollar. An uncontrolled and enormous volume of dollars flowed into foreign lands to wage wars, operate military bases, finance client states, and invest in foreign branches of multinational corporations, with total disregard for the promise the United States had made to back up the dollars with gold. In effect, the United States in its financial, as in its political and military affairs, was telling the rest of the world to like it or lump it. But emerging rivals, acting either to demonstrate defiance or merely in self-defense, took up the challenge by converting masses of dollars to gold. With its gold supply rapidly shrinking, the United States eventually chose to renege unilaterally on its promise under the IMF, which was set up by the Bretton Woods Agreement to be the linchpin of what was to have been a new era in financial harmony.

The IMF and the World Bank continue to function as protectors of the imperialist system, acting as the enforcers for core capitalisms: to make the periphery behave as suppliers of raw materials, provide opportunities for investment and trade, and last, but not least, to make sure that the debts to the bankers in the money centers are properly serviced. But are they guarantors of harmony at the core of imperialism, preventing the growth of rival empires? The setter of rules with which all the leading capitalist countries comply? By no means! Pay attention especially to the growth of disharmony in the leading money markets, where the headquarters of capital are located.

When the United States abandoned its pledge under the IMF accord to back international dollars with gold, it was felt by many that the cozy arrangement (for the United States) would come to an end. But it didn't. By that time dollar accumulations abroad, especially in the coffers of central banks where they constituted the bulk of reserves underpinning most of the world's currencies, had grown so large that no country could afford to do anything that might threaten the dollar's value. The result was that after 1971, as before, the United States continued to pour out dollars and foreigners continued to accept them. Between 1969 and 1977 the num-

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ber of dollars owned outside the United States multiplied by a factor of 4.5 and has continued to grow ever since.

The collapse of the IMF accord with respect to international currency stability set the core countries of the capitalist world economy on a road that soon led to an inflationary burst of liquidity and a different kind of havoc. For a short period after the end of dollar convertability, the top-dog countries sought to find a new route to stable foreign-exchange rates, which were seen as essential to the normalization of the world economy—presumably for the sake of an era of "postimperial-ism." But a meaningful agreement was hard to come by, given the conflicting interests of the powers and a reluctance to submit to continued U.S. domination. By March 1973 the leading capitalist powers gave in to the inevitable and moved to floating exchange rates, thereby opening the floodgate to rampant speculation in foreign exchange markets and the availability of exchange rates as a competitive trade weapon—precisely what the IMF was designed to prevent. Ever since the early 1970s, the exchange rates between the U.S. dollar, the German mark, and the Japanese yen have been on a roller coaster, accompanied by substantial swings in capital movements between nations, and large current-account imbalances between the advanced capitalist nations.

Nor did GATT—the other leg of so-called "postimperialism"—do much better. Although lip service is paid to the principle of free trade, ingenious ways are sought to create import barriers. Thus, the 1988 report of the Bank for International Settlements observed that

> so-called "grey area" measures comprising voluntary export restraints, market-sharing arrangements, and other non-tariff barriers designed to circumvent GATT rules continued to proliferate, bringing to an estimated 50 percent of the share of world merchandise trade that is in effect "managed" in one way or another.

So much for the freedom of international trade and the harmony of nations!

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Underneath all of this is a common underlying phenomenon, namely, a generalized slowing down of the economies at the center of the capitalist world. The slowing down, which has now lasted over two decades, spurred capital to seek new profit opportunities. With this came the growth of competition for privileged positions, the spread of protectionism, a move toward bilateral agreements (notably, Canada-U.S. and Mexico-U.S.), and a drift to the formation of blocs and clusters of weaker nations centered on one or more of the major powers. These formations are still in an early stage of development but the tendencies in that direction are becoming increasingly clear. Thus, reports by UNCTAD and GATT discussed the development of tripolar trade blocs and trade centers. The UN Center on Transnational Corporations added to the title of its *World Investment Report 1991*, "The Triad in Foreign Direct Investment," referring to the emergence of three main economic poles in international economic and financial relations—the European Community, Japan, and the United States. Note, for example, this observation in the just-mentioned report:

> Over the past two decades, developing countries appear to be moving towards a system in which their currencies appear to be linked, more or less closely, with currencies of major home regions, depending upon the strength of their trade, investment, and financial relationships. Thus, a dollar bloc appears to exist, composed largely of countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, along with a few other countries, such as some oil-exporting countries whose ties to the dollar are undoubtedly due to the fact that the world price of oil is quoted in dollars. In most cases, those countries operate a managed float versus the dollar, or a float tied to economic indicators which are themselves linked to the dollar. (p. 79)

Note also the Congressional Research Service's *Japan's Expanding Role and Influence in the Asia-Pacific Region*, September 7, 1990:

> Although Japan's role as an exporter of manufactured goods and an importer of primary products from Asia-Pacific countries is long-standing, its post-1985 emergence as the leading source of

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capital and technology, and as a growing market for manufactured goods, has made Japan the "core economy" and financial nerve center of the region.

Space does not allow for further exploration of these developments except that mention must at least be made of Germany's assumption of the leadership role in Europe, its thrust toward Central and Eastern Europe, and the growing challenge of the Frankfurt money market in competition with the City of London.

To be sure, there should be no need to remind historians of these echoes from earlier periods, such as the turn of the nineteenth century and the Great Depression. But, as we know, even when history repeats itself it does so in new and different ways. What I suggest, though, is that if one wants to understand the present it would be a grand mistake to do away with the concept of imperialism as an exploratory and explanatory tool.

Things economic and social move by their own momentum and the ensuing situations compel individuals and groups to behave in certain ways whatever they may wish to do—not indeed by destroying their freedom of choice but by shaping the choosing mentalities and by narrowing the list of possibilities from which to choose. If this is the quintessence of Marxism then we all of us have got to be Marxists.—Joseph Schumpeter.

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RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE NAXALITE MOVEMENT

by TILAK D. GUPTA

For more than a decade, the Indian media have been printing sensational stories about armed members of the Naxalite movement who run "parallel" governments in the parts of the country in which they have effective control. Paradoxically, the media have at the same time sought to dismiss the Naxalite movement as "infantile terrorism" indulged in by a handful of extremists with no mass base.

Both of the above depictions distort the reality. Most Indian "Marxist-Leninists" (the term commonly used to differentiate them from the two older Communist Parties) would readily agree that the militant struggles of the rural poor which they lead have yet to reach the stage of guerrilla warfare and the establishment of guerrilla zones. The stories about parallel governments are often planted by opposition groups from the ruling classes to defame the governing party for its failures on the law and order front. This kind of news also partly reflects the growing "yellow" cast of a press that caters to a market in which suitably lurid stories of Naxalite violence sell well.

Tilak D. Gupta is a free-lance writer for a number of Indian Newspapers and he contributes to the *Economic and Political Weekly*. He has had a long association with the Naxalite movement in Bihar. The author wishes to record his thanks to Bernard D'Mello for his valuable suggestions during the preparation of the draft as well as for editorial help. The responsibility for any shortcomings, of course, lies entirely with the author.

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Though the Marxist-Leninist movement in India has without doubt a pronounced armed character, it would be silly to paint it as "terrorist." Massive people's rallies and the continual expansion of mass struggles organized by various Marxist-Leninist groups during the last fifteen years, particularly in the large states of Bihar and Andhra Pradesh, bear eloquent testimony to their increasing political support. In short, while the Indian revolution is not exactly around the corner, there is no denying that the struggles led by Marxist-Leninists of today are more sustained and widespread than ever before.

I

When Charu Majumdar, the chief ideologue of the Naxalbari armed peasant upsurge and later the General Secretary of the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) died in police custody in July 1972, the initial attempts of the party to develop armed revolution had already been defeated. In his last writing shortly before his arrest Majumdar conceded that the "armed struggle in our country has, after reaching a stage, suffered a setback."[1] It was with that setback, that the first split in the CPI (M-L) had occurred by the end of 1970. After Majumdar's death the Party further broke into many factions, and sharp polemics among the factions continue to this day, as they seek to understand the reasons behind past failures and to plot out correct tactics and strategy for the Indian revolution.

With the benefit of hindsight, it is now of course easy to scorn many of the naive assumptions of the CPI (M-L) in its formative period. Resisting the temptation to try to sound wise after the event, one can briefly note in passing that all the major Marxist- Leninist groups now attribute the debacle, in varying degrees, to an adventurist tactical line adopted by the Party in its initial phase.

Before passing over to the contemporary happenings in the Naxalite movement, one important point deserves mention. Communists who supported the Naxalbari upsurge in

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1967 were not members of the CPI (M-L), which was not formed until two years later. Notably, a large proportion of the Andhra Naxalites remained outside the new party because of serious political differences. These sections, later organized under the banner of the Andhra Pradesh Revolutionary Communist Committee (APRCC), while sharing in the main the programmatic concepts of the CPI (M-L) and its assessment of the national and international situation, put forth a less adventurist tactical line for building a revolutionary peasant struggle.

For instance, whereas the CPI (M-L) ignored the unevenness of Indian society, rejected mass organizations and mass movements as breeding grounds for economism and legalism, and sought to initiate guerilla war by attacks on notorious landlords carried out by secret armed squads, the APRCC argued for unleashing an armed popular struggle to defend the gains achieved by various mass movements. The APRCC also favored building mass organizations and stressed the need to combine illegal and secret forms of struggle with open and legal forms. This formation too, in time, got divided into a number of groups, and the strongest among them, led by Chandra Pulla Reddy, merged with one CPI (M-L) faction in 1975. Interestingly, as we shall see, the current tactics pursued by the major Marxist-Leninist organizations bear a closer resemblance to the line of the APRCC than to that of the CPI (M-L) of the first phase.

II

A story circulated on April 10, 1993, by India's biggest news agency reports that the Home Ministry of the central government has "asked the governments in the Naxalite-infested states of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, and Maharashtra to follow an integrated regional strategy" to contain "the extremist violence and help address the economic and social problems being exploited by the Naxalites." (*The Times of India,* Patna Edition, April 11, 1993) The report goes on to add that "left-wing extremism showed

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a distinct sign of revival since the mid-eighties" and "in the recent past the movement has become very violent and spread to wider areas through mass mobilization on a significant scale." The report, given prominent coverage by most national newspapers, pinpoints Bihar and Andhra Pradesh as the "center-stage of extremist activity" and names five of the Marxist-Leninist groups as being in the "forefront of violent activities." These organizations, according to the story, are CPI (M-L) (People's War), CPI (M-L) (Liberation), CPI (ML) (Party Unity), CPI (M-L) (led by Ramchandran), and the Maoist Communist Center (MCC).

In spite of its obvious hostility to the Marxist-Leninist groups, the report is unusually near the mark. For one thing, it correctly locates the geographical spread of the agrarian movement under Naxalite leadership and names the most active organizations within it. For another, it recognizes the broad mass character of the movement and errs only in timing its revival. The resurgence, to be precise, began in 1977 when these groups began to take advantage of the somewhat more relaxed political atmosphere following the defeat of Indira Gandhi's government in the aftermath of her nineteen-month "emergency rule." Most of these groups started fielding legal and semi-legal mass organizations around 1977 to lead the rural masses in their struggles on economic and social issues. While efforts were made, sometimes successfully, to build mass platforms on student, youth, working class, women's, and cultural fronts, the emphasis was unmistakably on developing the peasant struggles in the countryside.

Although 1977 was a watershed year for Indian politics, in the sense that the era of the Congress Party's monopoly over the central government came to a close and a new epoch of relative political instability began, this phenomenon can be linked with the revival of the Naxalite movement only in a limited way. Similarly, though the economic condition of the vast rural poor was steadily worsening over the years, there was nothing special about the year 1977 to connect it to the movement's resurgence. But the rethinking within these

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groups about tactics and the regrouping of forces after the setback had by then reached a stage at which a fresh initiative was really in the cards. Certain favorable objective factors of the moment no doubt lent added impetus to this new wave of struggles.

When the first non-Congress government in Delhi was successfully pressured in 1977 to fulfill its campaign promise to release large numbers of imprisoned activists and leaders, including Naxalites, the Marxist-Leninist camp was strengthened. The banner of democracy unfurled by the parliamentary opposition parties to fight Indira Gandhi's "emergency" regime also made it difficult for them to unleash a reign of terror against the Naxalites immediately after coming to power. And at the level of consciousness, the denial of all legal avenues of protest during the "emergency" rule perhaps helped these groups to appreciate a little better that the Indian form of bourgeois democracy does offer some space, however restricted, for openly mobilizing the people on immediate issues. More importantly, from the movement's point of view, the promises made through the years with monotonous regularity by the parliamentary opposition to implement land and tenancy reforms and to alleviate poverty, while giving nothing very concrete, had tremendously aroused the aspirations of the rural poor. And unfulfilled aspirations, more than poverty as such, had made the downtrodden masses receptive to the Naxalite politics of militant struggle.

III

In the Indian Marxist-Leninist movement of today, there is no doubt an element of continuity linking it to an earlier stage. As in the past, the contemporary M-L organizations, by and large, view Indian society as semicolonial and the Indian state as being run by the comprador-bureaucratic bourgeoisie and the big landlords. Based on these premises, they continue to envisage the building of a broad united front of all anti-imperialist and anti-feudal classes for accomplishing the

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people's democratic revolution, with agrarian revolution as its axis. Ideologically, these organizations persist in upholding Mao's thought as a development of Marxism- Leninism and steadfastly support the positions taken by the Communist Party of China in its great debate with the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in the 1960s. As in the past, they persevere in their conviction that the Naxalbari peasant upsurge signified a turning point in the Indian communist movement, a break with the revisionists. The reader will note that this theoretical structure inherited from the past has been borrowed from the Chinese. One must, however, add that there is now a growing awareness of the need to develop a specific theoretical model for the Indian revolution among the Indian Marxist- Leninists.

Going beyond this theoretical continuity which keeps the various groups together, the contemporary Marxist-Leninist movement has a new look in a number of ways. To begin with, the movement today is headed mainly by a new generation of leadership, most of whom began their political life in the post-Naxalbari period, inspired as they were by the call for an armed revolution in India. Police killings, arrests, torture in custody, and the rigors of a long underground existence have cut short the lives of many of the pioneers of the movement. Though a few of the old guard are still active, the change is conspicuous, with mixed consequences.

The geographical spread of the movement has also undergone significant change. West Bengal, the birthplace of the Naxalbari, no longer occupies a prominent place. The state, uninterruptedly ruled since 1977 by a Left Front government headed by the Communist Party of India (Marxist), has been hailed by many as a unique model of communists sharing power within a bourgeois form of democracy. Without detaining ourselves in an assessment of this experiment, which now seems to have entered a blind alley, suffice it to record that the reform program of the Left-Front government has so far been rather successful in blunting the Naxalite challenge in West Bengal. Meanwhile, as mentioned earlier,

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Bihar and Andhra Pradesh have emerged as the main theater for militant struggles of agricultural laborers and poor peasants. The Andhra struggle has spread to neighboring regions in Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, and Crissa, and Marxist-Leninist organizations are quite active in parts of a number of other states. But there is no enduring agrarian movement of comparable intensity over large areas of those regions.

Most important of all, the immediate objective of the movement has been scaled down from that of launching guerrilla war against the state to a more practicable task of building the militant struggles of the rural poor over a vast area. Most serious Marxist-Leninist organizations agree that the present stage of the movement is that of politicizing the masses and waging partial struggles in order to create conditions for taking the struggle to a higher level. The armed squads formed by these organizations are generally viewed as instruments for helping the mass struggles and for defending their gains in the face of an armed onslaught by landlord gangs and police forces. Though these squads often punish those landlords and their henchmen that are considered to be particularly oppressive and occasionally launch attacks on police or paramilitary forces to seize arms and ammunition, the intent is to scale the armed activities so that they correspond to the existing lower stage of the movement. But there is apparently a considerable gap between precept and practice, and most organizations acknowledge that due to inadequate political education of the cadres and squads some unnecessary, even harmful, armed actions do take place from time to time.

Within this common tactical framework, there indeed exists a variety of shades with different emphases on legal and illegal aspects of the movement. The Naxalites also remain sharply divided on the question of utilizing the parliamentary form of struggle. But on the whole, the old tactics of all-out armed offensive in isolation from mass movements have been discarded. And the retreat in the realm of concepts has

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facilitated an advance in the real movement. A look at the Bihar and Andhra Pradesh struggles clearly shows that the moderate success achieved so far in building a relatively stable mass base has been achieved by combining armed activities with mass struggles of the rural poor. And these tactics, while far removed from the practice of the original CPI (M-L), fairly approximate the line advocated by the APRCC faction led by Chandra Reddy.

IV

In India, the conventional index for judging party support has been the votes polled in elections, but this method does not help much in forming an idea about Naxalite influence. The difficulty arises in the first place because out of the three major Marxist-Leninist groups in Bihar, for example, only one participates in elections, indirectly through a people's front. The biggest organization in Andhra Pradesh—the CPI (M-L) (People's War)—boycotts elections as a matter of strategy. Moreover, for the rural poor the freedom to vote is itself a right that can only be earned through fierce struggle. That the Indian Peoples Front (IPF) affiliated to the CPI (M-L) (Liberation) could poll about one million votes in the last Bihar legislative elections and send seven of its representatives to the state assembly gives only a glimpse of the Naxalite strength in that state.

The large following behind the Marxist-Leninists in Bihar and Andhra Pradesh is better manifested in the incessant struggles carried out by agricultural labor and poor peasants. It is also well expressed through the massive processions and meetings organized in the towns of Bihar and Andhra Pradesh by the mass organizations attached to the M-L groups. The mammoth rally organized by the Rythu Cooly Sangham (Peasants and Agricultural Labor Association), attached to CPI (M-L) (People's War) in May 1990, for instance, is deemed by many to be the biggest political show of strength in recent history by any party in Andhra Pradesh.

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V

Recognizing that the Naxalite movement has made appreciable progress in the period under review, it is necessary to point out its localized nature. Despite efforts to break fresh ground, their agrarian struggles have remained mainly confined to regions where the pre-capitalist socio-economic structure is stronger. Moreover, the extent of the Naxalite mass base, though impressive in absolute terms, still appears rather narrow when viewed in the context of a country of 884 million. Even within their sphere of influence, no broad peasant unity has developed. While the Marxist-Leninists describe the rural movements under their leadership as "revolutionary peasant struggles," it might be more appropriate to term them as struggles of agricultural laborers and the poorest sections of the peasantry, who usually also toil in the fields of others. Though some expansion of the movement is continuously taking place around the present Naxalite strongholds, a number of Marxist-Leninist organizations report that a sort of stagnation has crept into many of the old areas of struggle.

Looking beyond the agrarian struggles, one finds a host of other problems confronting the Naxalite movement. The industrial working class, middle-class employees, and other sections of the urban petty bourgeoisie have until this date not shown much inclination towards Naxalite politics. Lack of urban influence, localized rural work, underground existence, and the divisions of the movement have also prevented the Marxist-Leninist voice from being adequately heard on the national plane. Thus, in spite of a long tradition of heroic struggle and countless sacrifices, the movement has, as yet been able to make only a marginal impact on the general course of Indian political and economic development. To appreciate this point, one only has to note the swift and phenomenal growth of the Hindu communal forces in the last five years. Reference can also be made to the fact that the Congress Party-led minority central government has so far

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been remarkably successful in taking the country along the disastrous IMF path. Thus the tasks of deepening the agrarian movement and raising it to a new height and the need for boldly intervening in the ongoing political battles on the all-India plane constitute the major challenge before the Indian Marxist-Leninists today. The bewildering plurality of a multi-national, multi-religious, and caste-divided Indian society of course poses a host of other obstacles to forging class unity and advancing class struggle. It goes without saying that any successful revolution will have to take care of all these peculiarities in its strategic framework.

VI

It is almost impossible to capture the many colors in the Naxalite spectrum that are grappling to respond to these diverse challenges ahead. At the risk of making a very broad generalization, one can identify two major trends.

One trend, best represented by CPI (M-L) (People's War), the most influential group in Andhra Pradesh, is seeking answers to the new problems within the old strategic framework. For them, all enrichment of tactics must serve the cause of building a people's army and guerrilla zones in the countryside. With this objective, the group has deployed its main strength in the contiguous forest areas covering parts of Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Madhya Pradesh. To overcome the present lull in the movement that has occurred due to ruthless state repression, the armed squads under its leadership have already begun guerrilla-type counterattacks against the police and paramilitary forces. It considers legal party and parliamentary forms of struggle incompatible with the path of a people's war, and would go only so far in that realm as to an All-India People's Resistance Forum (AIPRF) to propagate the politics of agrarian revolution and to convey its views on contemporary national political issues. It rejects any unity or alliance with those it considers revisionists (the CPI, CPI (M), and even some M-L groups) but shows a willingness to form a united front with various nationality struggles seeking seces-

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sion from the Indian state. So far, this organization seems to be convinced that, apart from some small regions of capitalist development in agriculture, a Chinese model of agrarian revolution remains valid for the country.

Notwithstanding its theoretical rigidity, the People's War group has taken commendable initiative in waging political struggles and organizing urban work. In fact, it ranks ahead of others in organizing the students, youth, intellectuals, and cultural workers on different mass platforms and has been able to secure a foothold among the coal miners in Andhra Pradesh. This group also appears to have done better in mobilizing the owner-cultivators in anti- government struggles. The political campaigns it has waged against the danger of Hindu communalism and against caste discrimination are also indicative of its desire to integrate a variety of struggles into the revolutionary peasant movement.

On the other hand, a highly exaggerated notion about the revolutionary possibilities of the present national and international situation, coupled with the narrowness of its experience in regions where precapitalist forms of exploitation and oppression were acute, has often led the group to an adventurist course. Its excessive reliance on armed activities in promoting peoples struggles and undue emphasis on spectacular armed actions in resistance to state repression have taken the group, perhaps prematurely, beyond the stage of partial struggles without a corresponding preparedness among the masses. One should, however, emphasize that the Andhra Pradesh government's brutal attempts to crush all legal and open activities by the group and its associated mass organizations have further provoked them towards an adventurist course. One only hopes that the CPI (M-L) (People's War), presently engaged in self-criticism, will come out with a more flexible theoretical model as well as a set of tactics based on a realistic assessment of the current situation.

The other trend, most articulately expressed by CPI (M-L) (Liberation), is, on the contrary, making efforts to break out of the old theoretical-strategic model of the Naxalite

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movement. For instance, its decision in 1988 to stop calling the erstwhile Soviet Union a social-imperialist country and to offer a guarded welcome to the Gorbachev reforms in fact caused a furor in the Marxist- Leninist camp. It also stands apart in regarding the Chinese Communist Party as a fraternal party when others have dubbed it revisionist.

Curiously, this group, while being the last among the major M-L organizations to give up the old adventurist line, has gone ahead of others in effecting far-reaching changes on tactical questions. It maintained an underground existence until recently but developed a legal face under the name of the Indian People's Front (IPF) for the purpose of open political work. The IPF, combining parliamentary struggles with political mobilizations on important national issues, has become the best-known among the Naxalite front organizations across the country. Since 1982, this formation has been arguing in favor of a shift in emphasis from armed resistance to mass political movements, as the present conjunction of class forces, in its view, is not conducive to the former. This organization, however, continues to retain its armed squads in the rural areas of Bihar due to the necessity to defend the agrarian movement from enemy attacks.

More to the point, its understanding of the substantial growth of capitalist relations in Indian agriculture, the centralization process of the Indian economy, and the state, which is headed by a relatively powerful Third World bourgeoisie, has made this group reconsider the strategic path of revolution in India. In the early 1980s it came out with an alternative path combining armed agrarian revolution with the urban insurrection of workers. More recently, in its first open All-India Party Congress at Calcutta, in December 1992, the Liberation group, while asking the ranks to prepare themselves for winning the ultimate decisive victory in an armed revolution, did not rule out the possibility of a relatively peaceful transfer of central power to revolutionary forces under exceptional circumstances. Moving away from the Naxalite camp, the CPI (M-L) (Liberation), has also given the

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call for a left confederation to be built jointly with the mainstream communist parties—the CPI and the CPI (M).

These changes have, of course, helped the group to become a partner in the left national alliances that have mobilized to combat the communal danger or to oppose the IMF-dictated economic policies and thus, to play a more meaningful role at the national level. Simultaneously, it has landed the organization in an identity crisis because of its increasing theoretical proximity to the very party, the CPI (M), against which the Indian Marxist-Leninists rebelled in 1967.

That aside, the reference to the possibility of the seizure of power through peaceful means, though usually explained as a tactical ploy to secure conditions for a prolonged period of legal struggles, has been in the Indian context a signal for a shift towards parliamentarianism. While one should not hastily pass a final judgement, the growing preoccupation of the group with national level political initiatives and parliamentary tactics seems to be adversely affecting the further development of militant agrarian movements under its leadership. But to be fair, it must be conceded that the group's evaluation regarding the difficult national and international situation and the urge for an orderly tactical retreat to gain strength and fight another day has considerable merit.

It is of interest to note that though the "mode of production" debate within the country's left-leaning academic circles during the 1970s suggested that today capitalism rather than semi-feudalism dominates Indian agriculture, there have been very few takers of some scholars' prescription for a socialist revolution in India. The essentially pre-capitalist political life of rural India, the still unfinished business of land reform, and the preponderance of petty ownership in agriculture have made socialist revolution an as yet non-viable proposition for the Indian left, including the Naxalites. The few smaller Naxalite groups who have opted for a socialist-revolution model have so far failed to evolve corresponding tactics and to implement them in practice. But the academic debate,

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itself partly a fallout of the Naxalbari upsurge, has prompted a number of other Marxist-Leninist organizations to modify or reinterpret some of their programmatic formulations.

VII

Addressing a conference of revenue ministers last year, the Prime Minister, Narsimha Rao, sounded touchingly self-critical about the failure of land reform in India. "That means," said Rao, "that what we promised to the people before independence, after independence, election after election after election, all parties, has not been done."[2] The hypocrisy of such rhetoric apart, the Indian Prime Minister, hailing from Andhra Pradesh, has reasons to be apprehensive. Going through the motions of land redistribution has once again become imperative for the ruling classes to preempt the rising Naxalite challenge in the Prime Minister's home state and beyond.

That brings us to one of the major achievements of the Naxalites and shows their continued relevance as well. Truly, it is they alone who have kept the crucial agrarian question in India alive through their valiant struggles over the years. The Naxalites' success in actually redistributing land has been, however, only modest. The record of left governments in Kerala and West Bengal is indeed much more impressive on that score. But the whole point is that the land distribution by the Naxalite movement has come from hard struggle, from below, enhancing the consciousness of the rural poor.

And therein lies the other remarkable achievement of the Naxalite movement. When the bigger mainstream communist parties were too busy counting their votes and making tactical adjustments with one or the other party of the ruling classes, it fell upon the Naxalites to preserve the fighting spirit of Marxism. And it is only due to their movement that the agricultural laborers and the poorest strata of peasantry have, for the first time, made it to the political arena as an independent force freed from the apron-strings of the upper strata of peasants. The emergence of these classes as a separate politi-

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cal constituency, when it becomes a national phenomenon, is indeed pregnant with momentous possibilities for bringing the long-awaited leftward shift in the Indian polity.

VIII

A revolutionary transformation of Indian society, however, cannot be a mere agricultural labor/poor-peasant affair, nor can land be the only issue for mobilizing the various sections of the toiling people. Moreover, though a vast part of rural India is comparable with Bihar and Andhra Pradesh, there is also a large territory where agrarian class relations have undergone significant change. Given this backdrop, has the Naxalite movement the potential to break out of its present social and geographical confines to occupy the center-stage of Indian politics? This is a tough question to answer. Basically, it would depend upon a major theoretical breakthrough on the part of Indian Marxist-Leninists to resolve the accumulated problems of the Indian revolution and its ability to unify the movement on that basis.

Without going into the details of working out a new theoretical model—a task best left to the actual practitioners of class struggle—one would, however, wish to make a few general observations about the direction of such theoretical inquiries. To begin, many agrarian studies have shown, and even the Naxalite experience confirms, that the scope for the old model of all-in peasant unity against landlordism has become quite restricted due to the abolition of intermediaries between the Indian state and the cultivating and non-cultivating owners of land. A new theoretical model that can win over the toiling sections of owner peasants from the grip of rich landowners and integrate their anti-big- bourgeoisie orientation with the anti-landlord struggles of rural poor is thus urgently called for.

Moving beyond the agrarian sector, the crucial task is to sort out, from a multitude of social contradictions, the key slogans that best match the Indian people's aspirations. In China, the land hunger of the tens of millions of peasants, the

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autocratic Kuomintang rule, and the attempt of Japanese imperialism to turn the country into its colony gave birth to the popular slogan of "land, democracy, and independence." Will the same slogans, as the Naxalites tend to believe, capture the Indian people's imagination too? India is a country characterized by a parliamentary form of government, a relatively strong bourgeoisie, a changing agrarian structure due to capitalist development, and invisible external enemies (unlike the Japanese imperialists in pre-liberation China). One may therefore venture to suggest that there is a need to search for new categories to depict the exact nature of the Indian state and the corresponding slogans for the Indian revolution. But that, of course, is easier said in an essay than done in actual practice.

The other point is that the Naxalites, or for that matter, the Indian left, despite their many blunders, cannot really be accused of failing to bring about the revolution. The major contradictions of Indian society, while getting sharper by the day, have not reached the flash point yet. The working class, for example, is still disinclined to respond to a revolutionary call or to go for major political battles. Maybe the ominous growth of Hindu fascist-communal forces and the attack on the people's living standards in the name of the structural readjustment of the Indian economy will aggravate the crisis sooner than is expected. But meanwhile one also yearns for a minimum interim program that would stretch the reform possibilities within the system to its limits in order to bring about a more favorable correlation of political forces.

If the Naxalites succeed in these endeavors, having steeled themselves through militant struggle, they would perhaps be in a better position than the mainstream Communist parties—turned flabby due to long parliamentary practice—to rise to the occasion when the political crisis deepens. But that does not mean that the Naxalites will prove to be the only revolutionary force among the Indian left at such a juncture. In all likelihood it would be a joint venture in which the Naxalites would occupy a place of honor.

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NOTES

1. Majumdar's last writing is reproduced in Samar Sen, et al. (eds.) *Naxalbari and After: A Frontier Anthology*, vol. 11 (Calcutta: Kathashilkpa). Fellow *MR* readers may fruitfully go back to Lawrence Lifschultz, "The Problem of India," Review of the Month, February 1981, for a background to the first phase of the Naxalite movement. The present article draws considerably on the underground literature of the major Naxalite groups.
2. See Harkishan Singh Surjeet, *Land Reforms In India, Promises and Performance*, (1992), Annexture VII.

The new society. . . .is an abstraction which can take living body not otherwise than through a series of differing incomplete concrete attempts to create this or that socialist state.—Vladimir I. Lenin.

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ENGENDERING THE PHILIPPINE REVOLUTION: AN INTERVIEW WITH VICVIC

by DELIA D. AGUILAR

During the cease-fire talks shortly after Corazon Aquino's assumption of the Philippine presidency in 1986 the underground revolutionary movement brought forth some of its key leaders many of whom were previously anonymous. Among them was Victoria "Vicvic" Justiniani who suddenly found herself designated as the spokesperson for MAKIBAKA, *a women's organization affiliated with the National Democratic Front (NDF), which had been formed in 1970 and forced underground by martial law in 1972. Vicvic had joined the student movement when she was sixteen, and shortly thereafter relinquished the sheltered life offered by her landlord parents to align herself with the peasantry, whose struggle against an unjust social order became her own for the next twenty years. The cease-fire talks lasted only two months, after which Vicvic returned to the underground. But much international media attention had been given her striking (if shortlived) public appearances when she emerged for interviews and cameras, boldly outfitted with turban and rifle.* Time *magazine described her as "deceptively gentle in appearance," while the* Manchester Guardian *saw her as "the complete antithesis of the 'Amazon' image" projected on guerrilla women.*

On June 14, 1992, the Philippine military arrested Victoria Justiniani and charged her with subversion. Jailed for two months and released on bail, she is waiting to see how the new president, former Minister of Defense Fidel Ramos, will deal with political detainees and the human rights situation.

I conducted the following interview in September 1992. It is Victoria Justiniani's refreshing candor that permits her to elude official "politically correct" response categories and to sift through the as yet irresoluble contradictions shaping the day- to-day life of a committed woman revolutionary

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in the Third World. Vicvic was then enrolled in a special program for Asian/Pacific women offered by the Institute of Women's Studies of St. Scholastica's College in Manila, where I served as a facilitator.

Q: Vicvic, can you start by talking about your involvement in what is often referred to as the "broader" movement and how you came to develop a feminist consciousness?

Vicvic: My involvement has deeper roots in the national democratic struggle than in feminism because, as you know, MAKIBAKA was shortlived. It was formed in 1970 and went underground in 1972. In 1973 I went to the countryside and remained there until 1986, organizing the peasants. It was not until the early eighties that some of us interested in articulating feminism in the Philippine context got together and began trying to figure out how we might reorganize MAKIBAKA. We did this by contacting old members, some of whom were in factories, schools, communities. There were discussions held among sectoral women's organizations for the purpose of drawing them into MAKIBAKA as a national organization under the NDF.

The cease-fire talks, which lasted only two months, accelerated developments. In 1983 there was serious consideration given to reorganizing the NDF and its affiliate organizations. One plan was to reestablish KM [Kabataang Makabayan, Patriotic Youth] to give the united front real form and dynamism, because at the time it seemed as though only the Communist Party machinery existed and the rest appeared merely as an underground network of the party. So in 1983 when the NDF was reconceptualized, different organizations were revived, among them MAKIBAKA. It was during the cease-fire period that MAKIBAKA was projected.

Q: Are you still with MAKIBAKA?

Vicvic: No. I was involved only during its conceptualization. But I do want to talk about the women's struggle which in the Philippines has particular characteristics. First, it's integral to the national democratic struggle; that is, women are exploited

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not only because of their class but because of their gender. Women face graver forms of exploitation compared to men. It is important to see that in their participation in the people's struggle, women are simultaneously asserting their position *vis-â-vis* men, and in the process men are compelled to see them differently. A woman who is thus involved begins to command a wholly new kind of respect from her male comrades. In this way it is impossible to separate gender from the national struggle, because the two are mutually supportive.

Second, the struggle of women has a distinct character because it is not only a sectoral movement like that of the youth and the clergy. It is different from these in the sense that it is seeking a very specific change: to challenge patriarchy. It is integral to the national struggle, but it has its own logic.

Q: How do you define the struggle against patriarchy? Can you give me an example of how this is waged in your daily lives as revolutionaries?

Vicvic: Some of us in the movement have said, only half jokingly, "Behind every male cadre is a female ex-cadre." Our experience is that usually females and males in the movement start at the same point. Then when the woman gives birth, she lags behind while the man continues to develop. As a consequence, men move forward and women get pushed back. We women revolutionaries have noticed this happening to far too many of us. Even when women continue to be involved, their status inevitably becomes lower than the men's despite their parallel beginning. And all this seems so natural in everyone's eyes. Partly it's because we accept the fact that women form a more profound emotional attachment to their offspring than do men.

MAKIBAKA has questioned this arrangement. Growth and advancement in the movement has been possible only for those women who have been able to leave their children with their families.

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Q: In which case, it's not men, but other women—grandmothers, most likely—who have assumed responsibility for children of revolutionaries?
Vicvic: Yes. That's only one issue.
Q: Other issues?
Vicvic: Another is that of husband-wife relationships—"tuck-in," for example. [Makes gesture as though tucking something into a pocket] The woman's assignment depends on where the man is designated.
Q: As in a kangaroo pouch? Are there cases where the man is assigned where the woman is designated?
Vicvic: It's mostly the other way around. It is party policy to have wife and husband together, but in practice it's usually the husband's assignment that determines where the wife will be, although we haven't made an actual study of this matter.

Yet another problem is the stereotyping of women. For example, we are made finance officers, the assumption being that women handle money well. There is little gender sensitivity. Also in courtship. How are revolutionary morality and democracy maintained? But we haven't made any particular conclusions on these.
Q: How about women who decide not to marry? What is their status? Are there women like these?
Vicvic: Yes. There are single women whose promotions are unhampered. In fact, in some territorial committees there are more women than men in positions at the municipality and district levels, but this is not so at higher levels.
Q: Is there a large number of single women? Perhaps these are rare?
Vicvic: [Long silence] There are some. But I can say that there's a much larger male to female ratio. Consequently a woman gets courted by many men. [Laughs]
Q: Can you talk about your own personal experiences, how you developed as a political person?

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Vicvic: It's a long story. I was only sixteen and in high school when I joined the student movement. Now I'm thirty-seven; it's been a good twenty years of my life. I went underground in 1973. Initially I was underground in the city, then I left for the countryside where I remained.
Q: Your family is wealthy?
Vicvic: No, but they belong to the landlord class.
Q: Were your parents employed?
Vicvic: No, they were landlords.
Q: How did your parents react to your going underground?
Vicvic: Naturally they didn't like it. In 1973 my father had the military intelligence capture me, but I escaped from the safehouse. That's why I had to go to the countryside. The rallying cry then was anti-Marcos, anti-dictatorship.
Q: Were your parents anti-dictatorship?
Vicvic: Not in the beginning. But when Marcos' cronies monopolized the sugar industry, my parents lost their property and began to oppose the dictator. This happened around 1975. Before that time, I had no contact with my parents at all. But I understood their position. I knew that they worried about me. For a year or more I cut off communication, in part because it was hard to make contact. I only reached out to them when I got pregnant. By that time, they'd come to terms with the way I lived my life.
Q: You left your child with them?
Vicvic: Yes. I only saw him once a year. At that time the movement's orientation was that of sacrifice and serving the people. It was impossible for me to keep my child.
Q: Did you ever consider getting out to take care of your child? Did that ever occur to you?
Vicvic: No, because I deliberately strove not to have any emotional attachment to my child, knowing my predicament. I didn't want to be weakened in my full-time commitment to the movement. Others before me shared their experience that if you're a mother, you will feel the pain of separation. So

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I made no attachment to my child. But it was very hard; you just steel yourself. I gave up the child at one month of age.

I didn't even experience breast-feeding. Only much later did I realize that this is important for the child. So I resolved that the next time around, I must breast-feed.

Q: How many children do you have?

Vicvic: Four. I did not raise the first three. The fourth was born in 1989. The political climate was more relaxed by then and I also had been exposed to campaigns for breast-feeding.

Q: But after the first child whom you couldn't take care of, why did you have the second and third?

Vicvic: I wanted only one child; the second and third were not planned. Situated as I was in the hinterlands, I couldn't take pills, and condoms were not so effective.

Yes, it was painful to give my three children up, but I had to face the fact that mine was not a normal life. Yes, my parents objected to my giving up my children. They said: "You are a woman. It is your duty to take care of your child." I understood their stance, but I felt that I had a contribution to make by sticking it out with the movement.

Q: And then you changed your point of view with the fourth child?

Vicvic: Yes. In the beginning one entertains the illusion that without one's involvement, there would be a big lack in the movement.

Q: That the effect of your absence would be disastrous?

Vicvic: Yes, that the movement would come to a standstill. [Laughs] I didn't want to be a cause of its disruption.

Q: Were you made to feel guilty by your comrades so you came to think in this way?

Vicvic: Not just by comrades but by myself. I thought I could really do a lot. After all, I saw the greater sacrifices of others around me so I thought, why can't I do the same?

Q: And how did this attitude change?

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Vicvic: Well, when I left Negros for Manila I found that the movement did not come to a halt with my departure. [Laughs] Then in Manila I discovered that there were revolutionaries who had been able to keep their children for five years. This surprised me because I had not known that this was possible. Of course, perhaps conditions in Manila were less tense than in the countryside. I saw my children very rarely and only in guarded circumstances when there was no military operation.

So I felt, with my fourth child, that I would ask to be with her for the first six months just so that I may breast-feed. Breast-feeding became very important to me. I wanted to experience that facet of motherhood that I had never tasted before. I had never experienced watching my children grow. While I'd struggled not to heed these feelings that were inside me, it seems that the more one stifles such sentiments, the more intense they become. My attitude about childcare is probably contrary to what most mothers might feel when they tire of looking after their children. I practically grew up in the movement and now my wish was to know how it felt to be a mother to my child.

What is a few months away from active duty? After all, I've been immersed in it for many years. I may not ever taste what it's like to be a mother again. So I asserted this need. Yet I knew that in the process of mothering I would develop a bond with my child which would make parting more painful. I thought, in three months, two months, I would have to let my child go. I realized that letting go would be heart-rending then, because now there would be the emotional tie that I had deliberately refrained from cultivating with my first three.

Q: So you allowed yourself to be a frail human being?

Vicvic: Yes. [Laughs softly] During the whole time I was caring for my fourth child I concentrated on the moment, not worrying about the time when the baby would have to be taken away too. I simply decided in my mind that when the time came, I'd have to face it. And the time came. It couldn't be stopped.

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Q: In six months?
Vicvic: No, nine months. The six months got lengthened to another three because I had no *yaya* [nursemaid] to leave the infant with. I enjoyed the extension and continued my breastfeeding to the very last minute.

Do you know that the day my child and I parted was my birthday? I was alone by myself, too.
Q: You gave this last child to your parents?
Vicvic: No. I had no plans of giving this baby up permanently like the others. I thought that when I could, I'd get the child back and look after it. I gave the baby to my sister.
Q: Were the younger three identified as your children in the eyes of the community outside the revolutionary movement?
Vicvic: Yes. The story of my life is very complicated. The first three stayed with my first husband. He was one of my problems. He left the movement in 1987 after we had a serious quarrel which ended up in divorce. Perhaps he held it against the Party that my request for a divorce was granted [divorce is not a legal option in the Philippines]. He's angry with comrades and with me
Q: What were your reasons for divorce?
Vicvic: Well, I was really quite oppressed in my marriage. He was very possessive. Actually it was through him that I learned how a man in a very responsible position can wield power to dominate a woman.
Q: Do you think he used his position to dominate you as his wife?
Vicvic: Yes. He was very jealous, to the point that he'd make up stories about how I had lost interest in our relationship because of some other man. I felt very suffocated in the marriage. It was awful because none of his accusations were true, yet he insisted that I be investigated. I lost interest in him because I didn't think that he respected me.
Q: What difficulties do you have adjusting to above-ground life?

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Vicvic: Maybe the main thing is having to adjust to the pressure of earning an income, learning the pace of work. I was only a young student when I joined the movement, so I've never had the experience of a regular working life as an adult. I gave my all to the movement and, of course, my training there was very different.

Q: Aside from adjustments to the fact of having to earn a living, how about psychological adjustments? Not having to hide anymore, or give a false name?

Vicvic: [Laughs] That's the positive side. That pressure is gone, a real relief. One adjustment is how to make my life meaningful.

Q: You had a strong anchor then, growing up and coming to maturity in the underground. How are you dealing with the loss of that anchor?

Vicvic: I feel a pull in many directions. Sometimes I feel guilty that I have left many who are still in hiding, who are having many problems. You know, I am fiercely loyal; if you are my comrade, I'll always stand by you. I have these strong guilt feelings that somehow I have abandoned them, and I want to compensate for this through other means.

Q: Any regrets about having spent so much of your youth in the movement?

Vicvic: Not really. I'm proud of my work. I see it as an achievement that I've survived and outlasted many. Once in a while, though, I observe some who are new to the movement and others who've been involved for a long time. I can't help noting that many of these people have not suffered through as difficult times as I've had, nor sacrificed as much.

Q: You feel you've gone through too much hardship?

Vicvic: No, not really. It's only a fleeting feeling, one that I can reason away by coming to grips with the fact that I surely am not alone but only one of many in similar circumstances. Once I think thus, I realize that it's not right to have this view because all of us have our own peculiar trials. I am very much

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aware that all this is mere baggage that accompanies one's process of development.

I recall this person I went to school with. She's also involved in the struggle, but she studied medicine at the same time and now has an established practice. In contrast, all I have is a first-year college education; so I have a whole lot of catching up to do after twenty years. Not only did I make a lot of sacrifices in the underground, but now that I'm out in the open I have the added burden of catching up just so I can reach the point when I can earn a living and adequately support and care for my family. Of course the progressive movement will help out, but there's a large gap that I must fill myself. Sometimes I feel life has been unfair, but it's only a feeling and there's absolutely no reason for it because, of course, no one has cheated me. It's a bad way to feel.

Q: There's nothing wrong with feeling this way. It's only natural, isn't it? How do you now reflect on the political struggle?

Vicvic: If only we could change things through peaceful means, no one would have to go through what I did. But in the Third World I think we are forced to fight back, especially when you begin to identify with the masses. It's true that I've had to give up many things, but it's equally true that I was all fired up with a profound commitment to work with the masses.

As far as my children are concerned, I had to find ways to soften the impact of having to hand over their care to others. But I regret nothing, because I joined the political struggle wholeheartedly. Of course, at first I learned about politics from the propaganda movement in textbook fashion, but when I went to the countryside I witnessed the dislocation of the peasants as a result of the most horrendous form of landgrabbing. It was this that gave life to my politics and deepened my commitment.

At the time, great opportunities in the world market were being opened up to the sugar planters in Negros. Ten sugar

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mills were built, and soon there was not enough land to plant sugar. So the areas occupied by landless tenants and settlers, which were supposed to be public land, were grabbed by the landlords who began obtaining pasture leases from the government as a means of getting the land for themselves. But we knew that people lived on those lands—people who planted rice, root-crops, fruit trees, etc.. To get support for their cause, these people joined the FFF [Federation of Free Farmers, a peasant union], staged rallies, tried all the legal means available to them. The government response was to brutalize them and kill them.

So when the NPA [New People's Army, guerrilla contingent of the Communist Party of the Philippines] came to organize, hundreds of peasants would come to listen, because they saw armed struggle as the only solution to their problems. The enthusiasm with which they took us into their fold was overwhelming. They told us about how forest rangers (when the land was still forested) arrested them and subjected them to forced labor.

So this is how I became politicized. Politics was by no means imposed on me. I voluntarily submitted myself to working side by side with the peasants. I can tell you that relations with them were very warm; everyone was father, mother, aunt, uncle to us. Everywhere we went, they gave us rice, salt, whatever they had. Our ties to them were extremely close, closer than the bond between siblings. That's where I experienced the most wholesome, the best of human relations. That's why my loyalties there are very strong. It's so different from the way it is here in the city where there's so much criticism of one another, sometimes. I was happiest in the countryside, so I have no regrets. In spite of my poor marriage, just as long as I could be with the masses, I was happy. Even little achievements made us very happy.

Feudalism is well-entrenched in Negros, especially in *haciendas*. We would sit together with the peasants and discuss what the problems were in each area, conduct social investigation, and collectively plan campaigns to try to solve these. We

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would plan out campaigns ranging from simple demands for wage increases, to rent reduction, cheaper credit, and so on. [Speaks faster and with a noticeable rise in energy] There wasn't enough time to do all the things we wanted to do. We would talk these over with the masses and they'd get very excited once they discovered that there was something they could do to alleviate their misery. Then we would push the campaigns through and afterward assess our progress. Every little gain that we achieved invigorated us and inspired us to tackle other problems. We grew together with the peasants. That was the source of our simple joys. I miss those times very much. That is what gave me strength.

If one can only capture the drama that transpires daily in the countryside, it would be truly awe-inspiring. Those who haven't gone through this sort of life will find it hard to appreciate. We didn't endure any of these high fallutin' debates or theoretical discussions characteristic of urban politics. All we wanted to do was push through concrete campaigns along with the peasants, and we were quite happy with whatever success we attained. Then we could plan the next move to try and change social relations between landlord and peasant. We tried all kinds of projects—planting onions, setting up poultry-farms and piggeries, cooperatives, educational and health campaigns, and so on. Sometimes after we were successful in establishing a cooperative in a village, the military would suddenly come in and tear the organization down; the people would then have to move out and get dislocated once more. During the cease-fire when the masses heard about the peace talks, they told us: "If it is surrender you have in mind, just leave your arms with us because we will fight on." I can't speak for other areas, but this is what I experienced in Negros.

I have also had experience with the NPA. But even with the NPA, the consideration was never purely military. Before launching military operations, you have to have a long period of establishing legitimacy among the villagers. In Party lingo, on the personal level this is called "ongoing remolding." It's

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a process of clarifying for oneself one's direction, confronting perhaps the baggage of self-interest, as in "If only I were this, if only I could be that."

The last time that I went to the countryside, there was a KM conference attended by students in their teens. It reminded me of what I was like many years ago. But this generation is different. They're playful, less "grim and determined," as we were labeled then. I was happy to see that. There's a new vigor and enthusiasm; these young people were playing music, telling stories, singing new songs.

But the peasant masses live the same lives, maybe even more wretched lives. Their stories remain the same.

"Since Deng Xiaoping came into power, the rich people look down on the poor people," the bony, bare-footed man said. . . ."With Deng Xiaoping in power, the society looks after the rich people. When Mao Zedung was in power, the society looked after the poor."—From an article on the Chinese countryside, *New York Times*, January 17, 1993.

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ACCESS: POST COLD-WAR IMPERIALIST EXPANSION

by DANIEL B. SCHIRMER

In the upsurge of democratic opinion following the overthrow of the Marcos dictatorship, the Philippines adopted a constitution which stipulated that the U.S. military bases at Clark Air Field and Subic Bay, after their legal expiration date in 1991, could be renewed only by a treaty passed by a two-thirds vote of the Philippine Senate. In September 1991 the Philippine Senate defeated such a treaty, bringing the U.S. bases, with their 14,000 permanently deployed U.S. troops, to an end.

On November 6, 1992, a little more than a year later, high military officials including Admiral Charles E. Larson, Commander of U.S. forces in the Pacific, and Lisandro Abadia, Philippine Chief of Staff, agreed that the U.S. armed forces would again have access to Philippine ports and airfields. They did this at a meeting of the U.S.-Philippine Mutual Defense Board, set up under the terms of the Mutual Defense Treaty of 1951. Encouraged by the use of the treaty to legitimate U.S. access, Philippine political figures then put forward the notion that it covered U.S. military support for the Philippine claim to the much-disputed Spratly Islands in the China Sea. U.S. officials quickly denied this. The treaty, it seemed, was to be used to further U.S. interests, not those of the Philippines.

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The agreement was left vague, putting off possible opposition, but Admiral Larson gave his interpretation:

> We anticipate ship visits, aircraft transits, small unit exercises. . . .We simply hope to continue the exercise, the exchange of information, training, logistical cooperation, and coordination.[1]

U.S. officials in Manila expressed satisfaction. "We can continue to use Philippine facilities in a fairly liberal manner, without going through another crisis with the Philippine legislature," they decided, adding that they might, "eventually try to win a broader military agreement with the Philippines."[2] Chief of Staff Abadia evidently shared their outlook, predicting that "military ties could be upgraded and U.S. ships repaired on a commercial basis later."[3]

For Philippine officials following the development of U.S. policy in South East Asia, it surely came as no surprise when the United States turned its attention to securing access once its Philippine bases had been denied. Even before Mount Pinatubo's eruption made Clark Air Base inoperable in the spring of 1991, the Bush administration had asked Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand to consider expanding U.S. access to their military sites.[4] Commenting on Singapore's agreement to do so, President Bush in January 1992 declared access arrangements would help promote "stability" in the region.[5] A month later President Aquino wrote Bush endorsing the United States' future use of Subic Bay through access arrangements.[6] In the spring of 1992, as he successfully campaigned for presidency, General Fidel Ramos declared himself in favor of U.S. access to Philippine facilities.[7] In October, reports of the United States pressing the Philippine government for access appeared in Philippine newspapers. According to a confidential memorandum obtained by the Manila media, the United States wanted to discuss the arrangements in "military-to-military" channels to avoid a public debate of the contentious issue.[8]

Public debate occurred, nonetheless. In the spring and summer of 1992 most of the popular groups that had taken a

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stand against the U.S. bases came out against an access agreement, including the Anti-Bases Coalition Philippines, the Coalition for a Nuclear Free Philippines, the National Democratic Front, and a new alliance of over 100 organizations and individuals called the People's Congress.[9]

While Washington urged access upon the Philippine government in private, in public, officials like Secretary of State Baker and U.S. Ambassador at Manila Richard Solomon were saying their government would seek access only if asked to do so by the Philippines. Just before the decisive meeting of the Mutual Defense Board, Secretary of Foreign Affairs Roberto Romulo and Defense Secretary Renato S. de Villa assured the Philippine Senate that access was not on the meeting's agenda. As the well-known Philippine historian Renato S. Constantino pointed out, the Philippine people—in the matter of access—were first treated to secrecy and deception, then to a *fait accompli*. It appears that the Pentagon favors secrecy with respect to the access agreement policy. *Global Outreach*, a Congressional study, reports: "Military access agreements are generally classified, on the ground that they might be politically sensitive for the host country: in fact, the DOD (Department of Defense) does not issue an unclassified list of access agreements." Thus Pentagon secrecy withholds this information from U.S. voters as well.[10]

Besides Constantino, others spoke out. Editors, columnists, and cartoonists condemned the agreement as a violation of the Philippine constitution. A leader of the fight against the bases, Senator Wigberto Tanada, called for a Senate inquiry into its terms, and the president of that body, Senator Neptale Gonzales, criticized the military for attempting to "dictate policies," asserting it had no business entering into such agreements.[11]

To some the turn of events recalled the past. The achievement of Philippine independence from U.S. colonial rule in 1946 was a victory for Philippine nationalism, as was the defeat of the bases treaty in 1991. But shortly after independence the Philippine government agreed to the establishment of U.S.

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bases on Philippine soil, and this military presence gave rise to U.S. intervention in Philippine affairs culminating in Washington's long-term support for the Marcos dictatorship. Now, after the Senate had thrown out the bases, the Philippine military had agreed to the reestablishment of a U.S. military presence in altered form, and in the process had collaborated with Washington in flouting the Philippine constitution. Was history repeating itself?

The access agreement once more illustrates how U.S.-Philippine relations often bring the general contours of U.S. foreign policy into sharp focus. The history of U.S empire-builders in the Philippines shows them to be nothing if not flexible and pragmatic. When the colonial form of domination became a liability they turned to informal and indirect means supported by the presence of military bases. Now that the growth of nationalist sentiment has destroyed the bases' viability, they turn to access arrangements. They have changed the U.S. form of manipulation, all the while preserving its content: the use of the Philippines as a means of support for the projection of U.S. military power in the Pacific and the Mideast.

The use of the Philippines in this manner since the Second World War has been integral to a larger picture, that of the United States as a military superpower. An important element in this supremacy has been the presence abroad of locations (like the Philippines) which afford the U.S. armed forces the capability of rapid intervention, stepping-off points, so to speak. These foreign military springboards now take two forms, military bases and access agreements. A U.S. base on foreign soil is controlled and operated by the U.S. military and is accompanied by a permanent deployment of U.S. military personnel, often rather sizable. An access agreement gives the United States the right to use the bases and facilities of a host country with few or no permanently deployed U.S. troops. The first is the older form of forward deployment, typical of the Cold War (and before); the second is the newer, typical form of the post cold-war era. The Gulf War is the foremost

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example, so far, of forward deployment in the new mode, having been facilitated by an agreement Washington made with the Saudi royal family giving the Pentagon access to massive Saudi military bases previously built to U.S. specification (according to the "Frontline" documentary, "Arming Saudi Arabia," shown February 16, 1993, by WGBH-TV, Boston).

Today no new foreign bases are being established, while those in existence are being scaled back somewhat (more in Europe than in Asia). But at the same time the number of access arrangements is growing. The staff of the Arms Control and Foreign Policy Caucus of the U.S. Congress in June 1992 issued a research report called *Global Outreach: The U.S. Military Presence Overseas.* This stated that while ". . . maintaining nearly 100 major bases (of over 500 people) in sixteen foreign countries, the United States has or is currently negotiating arrangements with thirty-eight *additional* countries to allow the U.S. military to deploy troops and equipment." (Emphasis in original.)[12]

The convergence of three factors—the growth of nationalism, the end of the Cold War, and U.S. budget stringencies—seems to account for the fact that access arrangements have overtaken foreign bases as the preferred form for the expansion of U.S. forward deployment.

It was the growth of Philippine nationalism, as reflected in the Senate vote, that precipitated the change in the form of the U.S. military presence in that country from bases to access. In recent years such nationalist sentiment has forced the U.S. government to close down important bases in both Spain and Greece. In 1970, Libya, under Qaddafi, compelled the United States to abandon an air base in that country, and the Mideast as a whole has been extremely allergic to the presence of the U.S. military. Here even cooperative Arab rulers have refused to grant the United States basing rights, fearing the rise of radical nationalist opposition to their regimes.

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As a result, in the 1980s, after the fall of the Shah of Iran, when Washington felt it necessary to have an active military presence in the Mideast, U.S. bases were deemed to be politically inexpedient, and the procedure of access was widely adopted instead.[13] "We went for a major change in the normal American way of doing things in South West Asia," a Defense Department official later wrote. "We went for facilities, not bases."[14]

Characterized by the use of facilities that are the property of the host government and are operated by it, with few or no permanently deployed U.S. troops, access arrangements, by their very nature, offer a diminished target for nationalist opposition and minimize formal sovereignty issues.

Since large numbers of U.S. troops could not be permanently deployed in the Mideast, the rapid deployment of forces from bases in the United States and elsewhere became a necessity if military intervention in that area were to be effective. This called for the development of rapid deployment techniques and technology: highly mobile combat forces, increased airlift and sealift capability, pre-positioning of supplies and equipment, etc. While the methods and materiel of rapid deployment first arose out of the needs of the access arrangement model, they can now be seen as contributing to its spread.

Shortly after the end of the Second World War, the Cold War began and the U.S. government adopted the dual goal of checking its military rival, the Soviet Union, and stopping the spread of Soviet communism. To accomplish this the Pentagon set up a chain of military bases stretching from Korea and Japan through the Philippines and Australia, to Turkey, Greece, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Germany, England, and Iceland, in effect ringing the Soviet Union. To block what was portrayed as the danger of a massive Soviet invasion of Western Europe, U.S. bases were established there (most heavily in West Germany) with over 300,000 U.S. troops. In the early days of the Cold War the Pentagon followed a similar

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pattern in other parts of the world, with the long-term deployment of large numbers of troops on U.S. bases.

Today the Soviet Union has collapsed and the Cold War has come to an end, but not the forward deployment of the U.S. military. This has expanded and taken a new form, corresponding to what the Pentagon sees as the new global challenge and the conditions under which that challenge must be met.

Officials, military and civilian, made this fairly clear, as the U.S. military presence in the Philippines moved from bases to access. When he opened the November meeting of the Mutual Defense Board, Admiral Larson spoke in this vein:

> A new day has dawned. The Cold War is over. . . .The challenge is regional stability. Any development that threatens to interrupt the flow of ideas, capital, resources, and trade—we've got to meet this regional challenge with regional solutions.[15]

In an address on the eve of the withdrawal of U.S. personnel from Subic Base, Ambassador Solomon struck a similar note, saying the end of the Cold War had diminished the need for overseas military bases, but the United States would like to continue to have a presence in the region to insure stability for its business interests.[16]

Both Larson and Solomon laid emphasis on the end of the Cold War as the chief cause of the change-over from bases to access in the Philippines, in this way glossing over the defeat Philippine nationalists had inflicted on the Pentagon in the disruption of its operations at Subic. But it was the embassy spokesperson, Morton Smith, who put things in the best light for the U.S. commander-in-chief under whose stewardship the U.S. military had lost a valuable asset. According to Smith all was going on in accordance with a security plan drafted by the Bush administration that put a premium on "places not bases."[17]

The third factor causing the change in forward deployment is of course the U.S. budget squeeze. It is obviously

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cheaper to rotate fewer troops in and out of forward deployment (to "join local nations in training exercises") than it is to keep them permanently abroad in larger numbers. Foreign bases have often been accompanied by heavy U.S. aid payments to host governments, but now in the Philippines, for example, with the bases gone, such payments have been cut by more than half. With the U.S. economy in relative decline and the U.S. government head-over-heels in debt, access arrangements have become a distinctive feature, providing imperialism on the cheap.

The reasons that U.S. post cold-war expansion takes the form of access have been discussed, but not why such expansion occurs in the first place. The answer to this is suggested by the fact that some thirty of the thirty-eight access agreements, currently set up or under negotiation, are with governments of the Third World.

In the cold-war years the first target of the U.S. military was the Soviet Union, but there was a second target—radical nationalist movements in the Third World. Indeed the two big U.S. wars of this period were waged against radical Third World nationalists in Korea and Vietnam. Now the first target is gone, but the second remains. In the Cold War these two targets tended to overlap: the Soviet Union often supported nationalist movements in the Third World and communists often led such movements, as in Korea and Vietnam. Since Moscow's support for Third World nationalist movements (especially in terms of military aid) has diminished, intervention in the Third World carries less risk for the Pentagon.

It is in the Third World that the Pentagon, today, is especially concerned with what it calls "challenges to regional stability." Besides the proliferating access arrangements there are other indications of the Pentagon's interest in the Third World as a locus of military intervention and confrontation.

There is the U.S. intervention in Somalia with the declared goal of humanitarian aid to starving people. The Congressional research document, *Global Outreach*, reports:

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Somalia concluded an air and port access agreement with the United States in 1980. The United States does not currently recognize a functioning government in Somalia, but could revive access rights under a new regime.[18]

The present intervention could lead to a new government in Somalia. Renewed access in Somalia would once more provide the Pentagon with support for possible activity in both Africa and the Mideast.

In September, 1992 William Arkin, a nuclear weapons expert connected with Greenpeace, wrote on the Op-Ed page of the *New York Times* that scientists and strategists at the Los Alamos Laboratory were at work on a new generation of very small nuclear weapons for use in the Third World. They were doing this with the tacit approval of the Bush administration.[19] Even more significantly, perhaps, the *New York Times* of February 25, 1993 reported that General Lee Butler and his planners at the United States Strategic Command, without having yet advised the President or Secretary of Defense Aspin, were "in the early stages of building and testing computer models that would enable Mr. Clinton to aim nuclear weapons at Third World nations that threaten the interests of the United States or its allies."

As an example of enlarged military capability for the same purpose, the *New York Times* columnist, Leslie Gelb, on July 26, 1992, cited the existence of five lightly armed Army divisions and three Marine divisions, all designed to move quickly into trouble spots against Third World powers.

Global Outreach reports (as of June 1992) that while reducing its presence in Europe, Washington has increased its pre-Gulf War military presence in the Gulf more than ten times (from 2,000 to 23,000 troops), has concluded or expanded defense cooperation agreements with three Gulf countries (Kuwait, Oman, and Bahrain), and is currently negotiating with three others.[20]

The same report notes that the deployment of U.S. Special Forces Units in Africa has tripled in 1991 and will reach twenty to twenty-five Special Forces operations in 1992.

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Special Forces Units give instruction in counter-insurgency operations, the training of medical teams, etc.[21]

Lending greatest emphasis to the Pentagon's obsession with the Third World at the present time are, of course, the direct and outright military interventions it has conducted in the past few years: the airforce bombing of Qaddafi in 1986, the military overflights directed at Manila in 1989, the invasions of Grenada and Panama, and, pre-eminently, the Gulf War.

The results of U.S. military supremacy are plain to see in relation to the Third World itself. The dominant role of the United States in the Gulf War secured the control of Mideast oil to the U.S corporate elite by rebuffing Hussein's challenge to the royal families of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, Washington's clients.

Not so obvious perhaps are the results of this policy in relation to another problem the United States currently faces. The bipolar world of the Cold War in which the Soviet Union presented a military challenge to Washington has been supplanted by a tripolar world in which two emerging centers of power, gathered around Japan in Asia and Germany in Europe, threaten U.S. economic supremacy. The U.S. military domination of the Third World tends to offset the relative decline of the U.S. economy *vis-à-vis* these two rising power centers. In remarks likely colored by the interests of the organization he represents, a senior Pentagon official told Thomas L. Friedman (*New York Times*, June 28, 1992) why U.S. forward deployment was "good for business" in the face of commercial rivals in Asia:

> We are protecting those countries and they owe us. Don't think it does not come up in our trade negotiations. It gives us leverage. The Japanese know we are protecting their investments in Korea, Taiwan, and all over Asia, and that gets their attention when we ask them for money. For years we had an understanding with Taiwan that if an American company's bid came within 10 percent of a Japanese bid, we could get the contracts. They would tell us, "The Japanese make it better, but you're protecting us."

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The Japanese contributed generously to help finance the U.S. effort in the Gulf War, and they pay large sums to help maintain some 45,000 U.S. personnel on fourteen major bases. In fact, *Time* magazine of November 16, 1992, reports: "By 1995, Tokyo will be paying nearly $4 billion a year to cover the expenses of American forces in the country, which will make it cheaper to station them there than at home."

It is against this picture of U.S. policy in the world at large that the access agreement with the Philippines must be placed, its value weighed. Because of the Philippines geographical location the U.S military presence in that country gave support to both the Korean and Vietnam Wars, and during the Gulf War provided the U.S. naval forces in the Gulf with 70 percent of their supplies.[22] The Pentagon currently considers the Mideast and Korea the two regions most likely to produce "challenges" requiring a U.S. military response.

It is the access agreement that once more puts before the Philippine people the prospect that the Pentagon will use their country to promote U.S. intervention in the Third World. It was Bush (and Reagan before him) who pursued U.S. military supremacy while changing the form of forward deployment from foreign bases with permanent U.S. military personnel to access agreements with a highly mobile military and increased airlift and sealift capacity. But Bush was defeated in November 1992 and Clinton promised change. Will the new president's foreign military policy be significantly different?

Philippine military leaders evidently asked this question of their U.S. counterparts who were in Manila for the meeting that resulted in the access agreement. Philippine Defense Secretary Renato S. de Villa told the press of a conversation he had with Admiral Larson, Commander of the Pacific Fleet and Rear Admiral Thomas Mercer, Commander at Subic.

I asked them, "What can be expected in the security and defense areas from the Clinton Administration?" and Admiral Larson said he doesn't believe there will be any radical changes.

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Then de Villa added his own comment: "I understand that to mean that the future U.S. administration will not radically change force deployment in this area."[23]

A week later the *Philippine Daily Inquirer* of Manila carried the report of a speech Clinton gave at a Veteran's Day gathering in Arkansas; it seemed to bear out Admiral Larson's prediction. Under the headline, "Clinton vows to keep U.S a superpower." The story went on,

> President-elect Clinton promised to keep America's armed forces the strongest in the world. . . . Repeating a promise he made during his campaign, he said efforts would be made to increase military mobility, including investments in more airlift and sealift capability.[24]

But carrying out the Bush policies of military hegemony could involve Clinton in certain difficulties in view of other campaign promises. Take the matter of access agreements, Bush's new "security plan." *Global Outreach* reports that,

> Close to *two thirds* of the governments with which the United States has agreements are anti-democratic: they are one-party states (by law or practice), have dominant militaries, or are monarchies which deny their citizens political involvement,

and "well over *half* of the governments with whom we have arrangements have repressive human rights records showing basic mistreatment of their citizens."[25] (Emphasis in the original.)

It is a fact, of course, that anti-democratic and repressive governments in the Third World often serve to bolster a status quo friendly to global corporations on the lookout for cheap labor and raw materials. But how does this access policy, a policy of alliance with undemocratic partners, square with Clinton's promise to practice a foreign policy that puts a premium on support for democracy and human rights?

Again, it is the Reagan/Bush preoccupation with U.S. military supremacy that has done much to weaken our national economy and foster the budget crisis. How will Clinton

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reconcile the goal of military supremacy with his promises to revitalize the economy, reduce the deficit, and rebuild our country?

The answer to these questions remains to be seen. But one thing is sure—President Clinton will feel pressure from powerful sources to keep the United States on line as a military superpower, to the continued detriment of living conditions in our country. (Ex-President Bush's last minute foray against Saddam Hussein was only the beginning of such pressure.) Consequently, if Clinton is to move away from Bush's policy in this important regard, there would seem to be a need for a strong counter-pressure, coming, perhaps, from forces marked more by numbers than by wealth.

NOTES

1. *Daily Globe* (Manila), 7 November 1992.
2. Philip Shenon to the *New York Times* from Bangkok, 6 November 1992.
3. *Philippine Daily Inquirer* (Manila), 9 November 1992.
4. Philip Shenon to the *New York Times* from Singapore, 27 July 1992.
5. *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 5 January 1992, as quoted in Ma. Socorro I. Diokno, "The Philippine Bases Beyond 1992: 'Post-Bases' Scenarios," p. 6.
6. Aquino letter of February 3, 1992, as quoted in Diokno, "The Philippine Bases," p. 7.
7. *Philippine News Digest*, Utrecht, vol. 3, no. 21, 16 November 1992.
8. Ibid.
9. Conversation with Ma. Socorro I. Diokno, early October, 1992.
10. *Daily Globe* (Manila), 11 November 1992.
11. *Philippine Daily Inquirer* (Manila), 8 November 1992.
12. *Global Outreach*, pp. 1-2.
13. See "Middle East Bases—model for the future," by Denis F. Doyon, chapter 13 of *The Sun Never Sets*, edited by Joseph Gerson and Bruce Birchard.
14. Op. cit., p. 286.
15. Julius Fortuna, *Daily Globe* (Manila), 7 November 1992.
16. *Philippine Daily Inquirer* (Manila), 25 November 1992.
17. Julius Fortuna, *Daily Globe* (Manila), 28 October 1992.
18. *Global Outreach*, p. 8.
19. *New York Times*, 9 September 1992.
20. *Global Outreach*, p. 30.
21. *Global Outreach*, p. 34.

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22. Speech of Rear Admiral Thomas Mercer, *Philippine Daily Inquirer* (Manila), 22 November, 1992.
23. *Philippine Daily Inquirer* (Manila), 6 November 1992.
24. *Philippine Daily Inquirer* (Manila), 13 November 1992.
25. *Global Outreach*, p. 2.

Money is the *pimp* between man's need and the object, between his life and his means of life. But *that which* mediates *my* life for me, also *mediates* the existence of other people for *me*. For me it is the *other* person. . . .

If *money* is the bond binding me to *human* life, binding society to me, binding me and nature and man, is not money the bond of all *bonds*? Can it not dissolve and bind all ties? Is it not, therefore, the universal *agent of separation*? It is the true *agent of separation* as well as the true *binding agent—the* [universal] *galvano-chemical power of society*.—Karl Marx, "The Power of Money in Bourgeois Society," *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*.

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TOWARD A CORD OF SOLIDARITY: PROGRESSIVE SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE 1990s

by ELIZABETH C. KIM

The following essay won first prize in the Monthly Review Essay Contest for people under 25. The theme of the contest was "Progressive Social Change in the 1990s." All contestants received a free subscription to Monthly Review *along with a copy of* History As It Happened *(Monthly Review Press, 1990).*

On April 29, 1992, I watched in abject horror, along with an entire nation, as the four white police officers captured on videotape beating Rodney King nearly to death walked away free, acquitted on all counts except one, for which the jury was hung. What erupted for the next several days was one of the worst race-related upheavals in the history of the United States. I choose the word "upheaval" deliberately to describe these events because neither the term "riot" nor "rebellion" are completely accurate. The use of "riot" would imply that the events were merely random acts of violence and destruction, instead of a justifiable reaction to a racist verdict indicative of the greater racism prevalent, not only in the criminal justice system, but in society at large. "Rebellion," on the other hand, implies a defensible political consciousness. Its use, therefore, would nullify the very different experience of Korean Americans, as our stores became specifically targeted

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to be looted and burned, while the media portrayed us only as gun-toting vigilantes, haphazardly spraying machine-gun fire into a mostly African-American crowd, placing property over the value of lives. All of this only managed to further antagonize an already volatile situation that had been brewing since long before Rodney King, even before Latasha Harlins.

The verdict and ensuing reaction did not surprise me, and should not have surprised anyone else who had been watching the shaping of the political agenda of the 1980s. These events were merely what I would consider to be the culmination of the conservative political swing of the last decade, which had produced a climate extremely favorable for movements such as Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority, Tom Metzger's neo-Nazis, Randall Terry's Operation Rescue, and other hate groups, but had demoralized the progressive movement into near non-existence.

My first reaction to the title of *Monthly Review's* essay contest, "Progressive Social Change in the 1990s," was, what an oxymoron! How could I, having come into my political consciousness in such a dismally conservative decade, have any hope for progressive social change in the 1990s? Just when it looked as if the radical social movements of the 1960s and 1970s (which I look back on with such fondness and envy) were beginning to head the United States down the long road toward social equality, the Reagan administration and the "New Right" came into power by successfully blaming these movements for the "stagflation" and economic downturn of the Carter administration. Racism and sexism had been wiped out by the civil rights and women's movements, classism could not exist in our classless society, and heterosexism was the God-given right to oppress immoral sinners. These were the constant messages with which my generation was barraged as we were growing into our consciousness.

It is no wonder then, that there exists no solid progressive movement in the 1990s. The activists of the infamous 1960s are now approaching their sixties. They are growing increasingly tired as a lifetime dedicated to fighting social in-

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justice takes its toll, their victories seeming to wither away in their very grasp. Today we face a greater risk than any other recent generation of encountering homelessness, imprisonment, infant mortality, drug and alcohol addiction, lack of access to health care, unemployment, blatant and institutionalized forms of racism, sexism, classism, and heterosexism, and a deadly new disease called AIDS. It is now up to my generation to pave the way for the future, instead of continuing to depend upon the failed policies of the nation's political leaders, or even the remnants of the successes of the last viable progressive movements.

The issues facing young people today, outlined above, are obvious. What is not so apparent is what can be done before we reach a critical point. During the retrial, under federal civil rights laws, of the four officers that beat Rodney King, seven Korean Americans in Los Angeles, in a period of one week, two of them over the age of sixty five, none of them armed, were shot and killed by angry African Americans. The assailants were justified in their anger at a system that has never worked for them, but targeted another group that is victimized by the same racism and economic injustice. This is the kind of divisiveness that currently prevails. There is no sense of hope, solidarity, common oppression, or any of the other elements essential to building a progressive social movement. Instead, every oppressed community is scrambling to pick up the pieces in the aftermath of the eighties, many with revenge on their agendas; and if this revenge cannot be taken out on the oppressors (which is actually the oppressive system), then any other oppressed community that seems to have made relatively more gains, lacks a strong voice, or both, is a legitimate target.

What can be done to form a progressive movement in light of such seeming hopelessness? The answer to this vital question can be found in history. During the Second World War, when every Japanese American on the West coast of the United States, regardless of citizenship or generational status, was interned in concentration camps, a substantial movement

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of African Americans formed who stood up and denounced President Roosevelt's Executive Order 9066. They saw the obvious racism of this order, and, although its enactment had no direct effect on their own lives (and in fact, their opposition to it incited the FBI to create files on their "subversive" activities), spoke as a voice when the voices of their Japanese American sisters and brothers were silenced. Similarly, during the Gulf War, the Japanese American Citizens' League (JACL) issued statements warning of the possibility that Arab Americans could face internment motivated by the same racism. Just as African Americans were not the only ones to "March on Washington" during the civil rights movement to demand racial equality, migrant farm workers of many races, Japanese and Mexican Americans, and Filipino and Mexican Americans, built coalition movements for improved pay and working conditions. They were able to join together for a common cause, against a common oppressor, so that all of them could reap the benefits together. In the process they learned the truth of the fable of the bundle of sticks. One stick can easily be broken, even by the weakest of people, but a bundle of sticks tied together by the cord of solidarity stands up to the most stringent tests of strength.

The point of this history lesson is not merely to point out a few facts about race relations in the United States that the scapegoating and divisive majority would like to forget. It is to assert that the only way we will ever have a successful progressive movement is by building coalitions among all oppressed peoples. Racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism, and every other form of ignorance, prejudice, and discrimination are all interconnected. The same inherently unequal system that puts one-fourth of its young African-American male population behind bars is the same unequal system that denies women the fundamental right to have and maintain control over their own bodies, is the same system that passes Colorado's Amendment 2 which denies lesbians and gays equal protection under the law. The most effective weapon the dominant society has against oppressed populations is an

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amazing skill at pitting us against one another along with our inordinate ability to buy into their tactics and divide ourselves. They keep throwing a small piece of the pie at us for us to fight over, while keeping the vast majority of it for themselves to fill their already bloated stomachs. It is in recognizing the common nature of our enemy that we can finally begin to see a way forward.

How can we achieve progressive change in U.S. society today? Coalition building is both a lesson from the past and a vision for the future. We must recognize that because all of our oppressions are so interrelated, any progress for one part of the coalition is an advance for all people who profess a progressive politics. If even one of our sisters or brothers is not free, not one of us is free. The civil rights movement, absolutely the most successful broad political movement in the history of the United States, can attribute its relatively large gains to the power of coalition. It was led by African Americans, but was supported by people across all boundaries of race, gender, class, and sexuality, who recognized the inherent injustice of racism and its relationship to all forms of oppression. Even Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr., two men whose views about race were as disparate as night and day, experienced a growing unity toward the end of their lives. They were able to put aside their philosophical differences to discover that they were essentially fighting against a common enemy, toward the same ends.

What we need now is to concretely apply these historical lessons by forming our own progressive coalition. Because of our distrust of the system and of each other, perhaps the place to begin would be for various oppressed communities to all set aside their personal agendas and work on a neutral common project, from which all could potentially benefit equally. Perhaps a group representing progressive organizations of African Americans, lesbians and gays, women, Asian Americans, and Latinos could all come together to work on universal access to health care. This is an issue which affects everyone, and is not specific to any one group. If that project

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succeeds, this new coalition, building on the newly found trust and success of past projects, could slowly move into specific areas of priority for each group. Perhaps young African American males as an "endangered species" can be addressed alongside the concept of Asian Americans as the "model minority," reproductive rights, and an end to the ban on lesbians and gays in the military. Another approach might be for each oppressed group to take on an issue related to their community but not traditionally seen as their community's issue. An African American group working on reproductive choice, a women's group working on AIDS education and research, and a lesbian and gay group working on inner city gang violence are some possibilities. From these beginnings could stem a new unity, based on trust, experience, and a recognition of the interconnectedness of all of our oppressions.

The hope for progressive social change for the 1990s lies in the realization of the power of coalitions. Already there exist such groups as the Black-Korean Alliance of Los Angeles and the large number of populations of color mobilized for more education and research on AIDS. We can build on the coalitions already in existence, add some of the above examples of possible coalition-building methods, and move toward a viable progressive movement for the 1990s. Global social equality can ultimately be achieved if we analyze the successes and especially the failures of past multi-cause coalitions and apply the lessons to current social problems. It may not occur in my lifetime, and sadly, it definitely will not in the lifetime of the pioneering activists of the 1960s, but it will happen. When more than a majority of the total population realizes its oppression, in both direct and indirect manifestations, and joins together to "fight the power," the inherently unequal social structure will have to buckle, and a new, yet to be envisioned egalitarian society will rise to take its place. This is my vision for progressive social change in the 1990s, into the next century, and beyond.

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CORRESPONDENCE

The Tempest and *Babouk*: Shakespeare and the Colonial Subject

by Hal Jamison

Granted that *Babouk* is a timely and creative effort at describing injustice and oppression from the viewpoint of the victim, as Professor Wald contends in "The Subaltern" (*Monthly Review,* April 1992). However, along with that statement of appreciation, he attacks Shakespeare vehemently, if briefly. His criticism is directed at *The Tempest* which he cites as a negative object lesson rectified by work such as *Babouk*. On the issue of European aggrandizement at the expense of the native peoples of the other continents, Endore contributes towards setting the record straight which Shakespeare has at least tacitly twisted in a Eurocentric direction if not helped to create, Professor Wald argues.

Who would have thought that the Bard, a kind of "dead dog" in the sense used by Marx in referring to Hegel, would need to summon a defender to the pages of *Monthly Review*? But there Wald throws his gauntlet.

Thankfully Professor Wald's article comments only passingly on Shakespeare and *The Tempest*. Still, in my opinion, he should not go unanswered. To begin I would challenge one of his assumptions. He writes that, ". . .it is unlikely that Shakespeare created Caliban with the objective of vivifying or activating the colonial subject from the perspective of the subject himself." Wald's identification of Caliban as a colonial subject is an issue for consideration, not something to be taken for granted. He continues, "Most commentators regard the portrait of Caliban as confirming the ideological precepts of the master class and culture of Shakespeare's time."

Hal Jamison has for a long time been a friend and supporter of *Monthly Review*. He is active in several progressive movements and most recently has been participating in the Cuba Friendshipment project.

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This is undocumented head-counting, a flabbergasting example. How would Professor Wald respond to an assertion that most commentators in economics textbooks dismiss Marx's theories about capitalism as simple minded? Further on in the article Wald again uses the vague indictment, "most interpretations," to support his judgment that Shakespeare created Caliban as a "cruel joke that only reflects his own cultural ignorance."

A few points about *The Tempest* to challenge Professor Wald's theses that the play is Shakespeare's rendition of white master class ideology and that the character Prospero is properly seen as a subaltern of European expansionism misrepresenting as beneficent the European course of conquest and enslavement that was taking place at the time of Shakespeare's work.

1. Prospero bears more resemblance to a figure from an updated Grecian mythology, an Elizabethan Zeus or Neptune, for instance, than a sixteenth or seventeenth century agent of colonialism. Prospero, Caliban, and Ariel are modelled neither on contemporary Europeans, aboriginals, or enslaved Africans; rather they seem to come from a somewhat modernized Pantheon of figures sharing human and non-human characteristics.

2. In *The Tempest* Shakespeare pays no attention directly or otherwise to the driving force of overseas occupation and exploitation in his time: the quest for gold and other riches.

3. Likewise in this play he ignores Christian religious ideology, Catholic and Protestant, which was being used to justify conquest and exploitation.

4. There are several mundane contemporary figures in *The Tempest* that, it could hardly be claimed, serve as positive advertisements for European culture; they are a rascally, villainous lot: Antonio, Ferdinand, Adrian, Francisco—not at all resembling such "heroes" as Raleigh, Drake, Columbus, etc.

5. Caliban is not a descendant of Africans sold into slavery nor is there anything in the play to connect him to the suffering masses on the Caribbean islands. He is not a Babouk, depicted by Endore as an inspirer and leader of revolt. In the genealogy of his creator, he is the son of Sycorax, a witch with such extra-human powers as the ability to pin the "airy spirit" Ariel in a cloven pine.

6. The first settler on *The Tempest*'s uninhabited island, as the stage directions name it, was Sycorax; that is, not counting Ariel, Iris, Ceres and the other more luminous spirits. On the basis of his relation to her Caliban claims ownership of the island. This does not suggest that native property rights in the real world was an issue the

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playwright was directing his attention to. Likewise, sovereignty is reduced to a subject of wit: Caliban says to Prospero: "I am all the subjects that you have." But at the end of the play when Prospero, Miranda, and all the shipwrecked crew and passengers return to Italy, Caliban is left with no subject but himself.

7. Miranda accuses Caliban of trying to rape her. He admits it. But what seems to me to be suggested by this anecdote, given the atmosphere of ethereal fancy arising from Prospero's magical powers and the earth-and-mortality-freed tricks and deeds of Ariel is not real-world sexual crime and violence but playful allusion to the Book of Genesis: "—I had peopled else/This isle with Calibans," Caliban says to Miranda and Prospero.

Whether Shakespeare was foretelling anything positive or negative about "the brave new world" (Act 5, Scene 1: Miranda) may be argued.

> You taught me language, and my profit on't
> Is I know how to curse. The red plague rid you
> For learning me your language!
> (Act 1, Scene 2: Caliban)

Might those lines bespeak Shakespeare's despair at the emerging world order, Prospero and Caliban mythically representing the origins out of which willy-nilly the human enterprise was fated to be constructed? Might they also for the mighty dramatist and magic-spinner of words bespeak dialectically his hope?

The Tempest commences with a real tempest which the mortals on board "a ship at sea" (first footnote in the Oxford University edition: Shakespeare's stage directions do not specify a ship at sea) cannot save themselves from. The ship will not hold together; the crew's efforts fail. Established institutions, hierarchies, ideologies are also ineffective. Gonzalo tells the boatswain to remember who he has aboard and the boatswain replies:

> None that I love more than myself.
> You are a councillor;
> if you can command these elements to silence,
> and work the peace of the present,
> we will not hand a rope more—use your authority. . .

We might take the storm of Act 1, Scene 1 as Shakespeare's anticipation of the four hundred year storm that was starting to blow

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up in his day, the ravaging and racking of conquest, exploitation, and accumulation then getting under way. And were the Boatswain's words that it was idle to appeal, to modernize, for instance, to Presidents, Popes, or First Secretaries ever more apt than today? Would Professor Wald agree that the ship can only be saved by the crew, uni-class and multi-racial?

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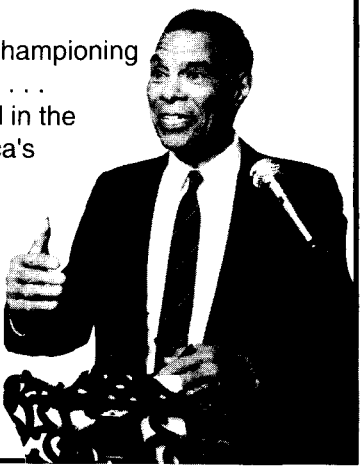

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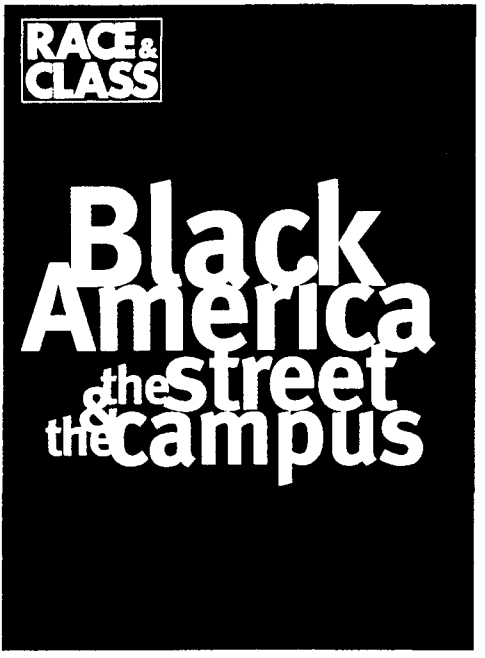

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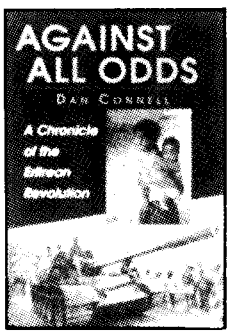

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(Continued from inside front cover)

said Laura D'Andrea Tyson, the head of the President's Council of Economic Advisers. 'The economy is growing more slowly.'"

Okay, we agree. A weak recovery—so weak that it hardly deserves the name—adds few jobs. This is pretty close to a tautology, like saying that sleeplessness is caused by insomnia. And unless Louis Uchitelle has missed something important, it seems to be about the extent of mainstream wisdom on the economy. There is no hint in his report that any of the observers and experts he consulted had thoughts about why the recovery is so weak.

What explains the failure to express an opinion on this crucially important question? Is it a matter of ignorance, or is it perhaps unwillingness to face up to the implications of a straight-forward answer? We think the latter. Most economists, regardless of their political orientation, agree that a meaningful recovery from a recession or a depression is a response to a strong surge in demand for goods and services. They also agree that demand comes primarily from three sources: consumption, business investment, and government spending. At the present time all three are subject to severe restraints that have their roots in the history of the last decade or two. Consumption is held back by declining real wages, widespread unemployment, and heavy consumer indebtedness. Business investment is inhibited not by any lack of corporate profits or available loan capital but by the existence of idle capacity throughout much of the economy. And government spending is severely constrained by the politically deeply held need to reduce the deficit and slow the growth of the national debt. None of these restraining factors is accidental, short-run, or likely to be significantly ameliorated in the foreseeable future.

To be brutally frank, no one has the slightest idea of how to deal with them while remaining within the rules of the capitalist game. And, sadly enough, even discussing what could and should be done outside these rules is strictly forbidden in polite society.

We record with deep sorrow the death at age seventy-four, on July 17th, after a long struggle with cancer, of an old friend and frequent contributor to *MR* and MR Press, James Boggs. A migrant from rural Alabama to Detroit, Jimmy became an auto worker and union militant during the exciting years of the rise of the CIO. In later years he and his wife Grace Lee Boggs devoted their energies to writing and community organizing in Detroit, one of the centers of U.S. progressive politics in the post-Second World War period. His book *The American Revolution: Papers From a Negro Worker's Notebook*, published by MR Press in 1963, became an important document of the radical wing of the Civil Rights/Black Liberation movement of the 1960s. Jim and Grace continued their community work ever since. On July 13, four days before his death, Grace wrote us, "We're hoping to drive to Maine around the middle of August and return before Labor Day. Meanwhile, Jim is in good spirits and very busy. He is writing letters to the editor, being interviewed for a series on public radio, and a writer friend of ours is beginning a Malcolm X-type autobiography of him." This tells a lot about the kind of person Jim was. We look forward eagerly to the autobiography.

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